

WASHINGTON
DAILY NEWS
31 DEC 1968

"Why Didn't They Shoot Her?" Russell Asks

Pueblo Crew Unheroic to Senator

WINDER, Ga., Dec. 31 (UPI) — Sen. Richard Russell, D-Ga., outgoing chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, says he's not convinced there were any heroes aboard the USS Pueblo.

He said yesterday he plans an investigation to determine why the Pueblo captain did not scuttle the ship to prevent its valuable intelligence equipment from falling into North Korean hands.

The Democratic senator, who will assume the chairman whip of the Senate Appropriations Committee when Congress convenes, said he had asked the Navy to show him the orders of the commander of the seized vessel to "see why the commanding officer didn't sink her," rather than permit its capture.

"I'm of the opinion that we're wasting a great deal of money sending these ships around the world if they're all going to handled like the Pueblo was if any danger arises — I think we would be better off to just bring them home," he said.

The senator said that a day after the ship was brought to port in North Korea last Jan. 22, "a couple of the largest Russian freight planes came there and flew away loaded to the eyes with the equipment that had come out of that ship."

Sen. Russell also criticized the terms under which the 82 surviving crewmen were freed last week and questioned whether they had acted heroically during their 11 months imprisonment in North Korea.

"They were heroes in the sense that they survived the imprisonment," he said, "but they did sign a great many statements that didn't reflect to my mind any great heroism."

"I haven't been able to understand how the captain of the ship and his officers have been hailed as heroes. I've got to investigate and find out just

what heroic act they performed."

New Beatings of Pueblo Crew Are Barred

SAN DIEGO, Calif., Dec. 31 (UPI) — A gesture of contempt by a Pueblo crewman in a North Korean propaganda photo resulted in a beating with a 4-by-4 plank when his captors found out what it meant.

Two crew members of the U.S. intelligence ship told newsmen yesterday they and their shipmates used the obscene gesture to express contempt for their captors.

Quartermaster 1.C. Charles B. Law Jr., of Port Townsend, Wash., and Radioman 2.C. Lee R. Hayes of Columbus, Ohio, said when the communists realized they had been tricked the offending crewmen were punished with clubbings.

"We wanted to let everybody in the U.S. know" that the North Koreans were trying to give an untrue impression in the photograph, Mr. Law said.

The gesture went unnoticed by the photographer, who was trying to show the sailors in good spirits and health.

The North Koreans learned of gestures about three weeks ago after the picture was circulated worldwide.



--UPI Photo
Charles Law (left) and Lee R. Hayes tell the story of their beatings at the hands of North Koreans.

Mr. Law said he was taken to a room where he was confronted by four North Korean officers and a guard.

"I was forced to assume a kneeling position and was cuffed around the head and neck a little," Mr. Law said. He said he then was beaten with 2-by-4s until they broke in two.

"The guard then got a 4-by-4 and I was forced to assume the same position," Mr. Law said. "And they hit me a few blows

on the shoulder and back." Then they administered an assortment of kicks and punches all over his body.

"I must have received between 240 and 300 blows," he said. Both sailors said the beatings were the worst they received during their 11 months in captivity.

Mr. Hayes said he was punched in the jaw by a North Korean and broke it afterwards. He said his jaw was still mending.